

Embracing Health Equity

November 2016

Embracing Health Equity – We Are Health Equity!

Throughout the year, CPH staff will receive Health Equity “News Blasts” to raise awareness on topics relevant to achieving optimal health for all. These updates are brought to you by the [CPH Diversity & Equity Committee](#) and the [CPH Health Equity Section](#).

What is Food Insecurity?

For many Americans, the holidays represent a time to gather with family and friends around hearty, delicious food. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that not all Americans have access to adequate nutrition.

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food security as “access by **all people at all times** to enough food for an active, healthy life.”¹
- Food insecurity refers to **reduced food intake** or **disrupted eating patterns** that occur due to a household’s lack of money or other resources for food.¹
- **Nearly 13% of households in the U.S.** experienced food insecurity at some time during 2015.¹
- **18% of Franklin County residents** experienced food insecurity in 2014.²
- Food insecurity is associated with **poor health outcomes** such as diabetes, heart disease, depression and obesity.³



Who Is Most At Risk for Experiencing Food Insecurity?

While food insecurity is a national concern, it affects some groups of Americans more than others. The following groups experience rates of food insecurity higher than the national average:

- All households with children (17% in 2015)¹
- Households headed by African American individuals (22% in 2015)¹
- Households headed by Hispanic individuals (19% in 2015)¹
- Low-income households with incomes below 185% of the poverty threshold (33% in 2015)¹
- LGBT individuals (almost 2 times more likely than non-LGBT to have experienced food insecurity in 2012)⁴

Risk for food insecurity may be most significant for those who occupy more than one of these groups. For example, African-American and Native-American LGBT adults

were found to have experienced food insecurity at rates higher than white LGBT adults (37% and 55% vs. 23%).⁴

How Can CPH Employees Help Address Food Insecurity?

On Monday, November 21, Franklin County and the city of Columbus revealed a new [Local Food Action Plan](#), which outlines strategies to increase food access, cut down on food waste, and improve the local economy. CPH employees can join the city and county in working toward decreasing food insecurity by becoming familiar with its causes, providing resources to those who need them, and [registering to receive updates](#) about the Local Food Action Plan!



Learn more about the relationship between food security and public health through [Food Research and Action Center](#) publications such as [SNAP and Public Health](#) and [Understanding the Connections: Food Security and Obesity](#).

Connect others to **emergency food assistance** through Hands On Central Ohio's [2-1-1 Online Directory of Human Services](#).

Locate **walk-in food pantries**, **free meals** and **other types of food assistance** in Central Ohio at [The Children's Advocacy Project's Food Resource page](#). Consider volunteering your time, money and/or nonperishable food to local organizations that address food insecurity!

Access to Care Updates

The Access to Care program works to address and provide leadership for community initiatives and system-based responses that address health care access issues.

The Health Insurance Marketplace opened on **November 1**, so please encourage clients to stop by the resource room at CPH to review their options, ensure they're getting the best plan and understand their coverage!

Number of clients served in the Resource Room – October 2016

Total served: **66**

Presumptive eligibility for Medicaid applications: **24**

Medicaid enrollments: **36**

Marketplace applications: **2**

Information on the location and hours of the Resource Room can be found on the [Access to Care webpage](#).

Watch for the next Embracing Health Equity News Blast coming your way! More at [Embracing Health Equity](#).

For more information on health equity initiatives at Columbus Public Health, please contact Malaika Brewer at 614-645-1345 or MABrewer@columbus.gov.